

EXPRESSING REGARD AND SYMPATHY TO UKRAINE AT 68TH ANNIVERSARY REMEMBRANCE OF GREAT FAMINE OF 1932 AND 1933

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, today I rise for the record to express my deepest regard and sympathies to the new Nation of Ukraine at its 68th anniversary remembrance of the tragic great famine of 1932 and 1933.

Ukraine, always known as the breadbasket of Europe, lost nearly a quarter of its population as the Stalinist-led government, headquartered in Moscow then, forcibly exported Ukraine's wheat and spent the money earned on industrialization.

□ 2000

Only God knows the true count of the millions of Ukrainian peasants and village dwellers who were systematically starved to death as collectivization of the countryside made independent farming impossible.

Inside the borders of the Soviet Union, over 50 million people ultimately perished through the end of the Second World War, beginning with upwards of 8 million innocent people who died during forced famine of the early 1930s. The totalitarian regime of Joseph Stalin understood the power of food as the most fundamental weapon and used it cruelly.

For several centuries, Ukraine then fought for its freedom. When forced to join the U.S.S.R. in the 20th century, Ukrainians resisted with valor. The forests of Western Ukraine are filled with the bones of their sacrifice. Every family suffered permanent losses. Yet no threats or punishments could deter Ukraine from its constant attempts to leave the Soviet Union and restore its independence.

Fearing for the integrity of its empire, the Soviet regime then decided to simply eliminate Ukrainian culture by destroying the intellectual and military elite that pursued ideals of freedom and liberty. The regime falsified history and finally starved millions upon millions into submission.

Genocide of this magnitude is unparalleled in human history. It is almost impossible to comprehend a political system that would contemplate and plan the deaths of millions of its citizens. These deaths of men, women, children and elderly were executed in the most tortuous ways imaginable. Young men were forcibly inducted into the military, taken from their farms and villages. Families that did not cooperate were shot. The remaining millions were starved to death. Women and children scratched in the frozen earth to find even an onion to make soup in the winter. Mothers died to give their last shreds of food to their children.

History shows even in the face of such brutality, Ukrainians did not retreat. They continued to fight for freedom. Deep in their souls their spirits remained unbent and steadfast.

When Ukrainian independence finally was declared in 1991, Ukrainian patriots did not rest. They refused to forget their roots and live like tumbleweeds. Life without a homeland for them was life not worth living. Finally, they prevailed; but the memory of the earlier horrors remained always and drives them in their sense of duty.

Many of my own ancestors died miserably inside what is now Ukraine during the 1930s. Our family well knows that this horror occurred.

We, history, must never forget that such profound events happened. We must remember. We must prevent such evil from happening again. We must also recognize that such hatred can be perpetrated only when freedom does not reign in a land. Therefore, we must maintain our dedication to freedom and representative government.

We must resist anyone who attempts to take it from us. We must help those in the world who have gained their democratic freedoms to keep them alive and nurture them into maturity. We must not rest until such seemingly simple gifts as a right to life and the right to pursue happiness are guaranteed for every person in the world.

Democratic freedoms must prevail more now than ever. Recent events make us more aware of precious endowments of our known Nationhood. Now we have an additional reason to continue our work for democratization and defense of human rights. The memory of those who died defenselessly in this struggle so long ago deserve to be honored.

For several centuries, Ukraine has fought for its freedom. When forced to join the U.S.S.R., Ukrainians resisted with valor. In furtherance of this remembrance, I would strongly encourage the United States Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad, and the U.S.-Ukraine Joint Cultural Heritage Commission, each funded annually by the Congress of the United States on behalf of the people of the United States, to accurately reflect the great famine in their historical documentations, including cemeteries, massacre sites and other hallowed grounds in Ukraine. Those commemorations should also give proper tribute and restore the lost heritage resulting from the mass immigration of writers and scholars to the West.

In closing, Madam Speaker, we will mourn the lives of these innocent people lost to history on November 17, 2001, when a commemorative service will be held in St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City. Let us never forget them. Let us work ever harder to build a world free of terror for our children.

COMMEMORATION OF THE 68TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UKRAINIAN FAMINE-GENOCIDE OF 1932-1933

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. HART). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HORN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of millions of innocent Ukrainians who were systematically starved to death by the Soviet Government in 1932 and 1933.

A comprehensive campaign to kill Ukrainian citizens and to destroy all vestiges of Ukrainian nationalism was carried out by Joseph Stalin, the dictator of the Soviet Union; and his policies of forced collectivization of both agriculture and industry was part of the problem. Although almost a quarter of the Ukrainian population died in those 2 years, 1932 and 1933, their tragedy remained unknown to the rest of the world for almost 60 years.

Joseph Stalin's collectivization policy to finance Soviet industrialization had a disastrous effect on agricultural productivity. In fact, between the First World War and the Second World War productivity in agriculture doubled, but not with the industrialization and the collectivization. The Northern Caucasus and the Lower Volga River area were part of that famine that occurred.

Without regard for the negative consequences of this policy, Stalin raised Ukraine's grain quotas by 44 percent. Because Soviet law required that the government's grain quota be filled before no other food distribution, peasants were effectively starved to death. Stalin enforced this law absolutely mercilessly. Those who refused to give up their grain were executed or deported. The death toll from the famine is estimated to be 6 to 7 million people. That is quite a bit when Stalin, the dictator, had killed about 25 million in his own country.

Yet, despite this atrocity, Ukrainians still struggled to restore their independence and freedom. There is no doubt that when Ukraine declared its independence on August 24, 1991, it vindicated the deaths of so many Ukrainians during the famine.

Madam Speaker, during the difficult time in our own country, it is important to recognize the courage of other peoples and other generations in the long struggle for freedom. It is equally important that we build on this example by teaching compassion to our young people and reinforcing our resolve to prevail over evil.

We must never forget that many innocent lives have been taken to undermine our commitment to the ideals of freedom and democracy. With this commemoration, we honor the memory of Ukrainians whose lives were lost in the struggle to gain independence; and we renew our commitment to justice for all.